1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

609 123 115 scratched like a "*tigri*"—a tiger, for this is how the Bush Negroes name the jaguar. Later, when we saw him dance the Tigri Kromanti dance, we witnessed one of the most realistic feline interpretations imaginable. But that is another matter.

Now Apanto was an obia man to be reckoned with, and his fellow villagers and the villagers of neighboring settlements treated him with a deference that his age alone could never have commanded. And it was this Apanto who now came up and said that he would sing the sacred Kromanti songs for our phonograph.

"You will not understand the songs. They will be in the Kromanti language," he warned us. "They are strong, and the machine must be strong to carry them."

It happens that a field phonograph is anything but strong. The mechanism is simple, since the instrument must be light enough to be carried about, and yet it often is subjected to all manner of hard usage. To this is added the [126] hazard of the climate. The turntable is actuated by a belt running from the mechanism inside the case, and the ends of this belt are glued together. This, to be sure, we discovered later. At the moment, we met Apanto's challenge with assurance. We did not doubt that the machine was spiritually strong.

126 533 [197] 539 What he said about the Kromanti language was true. The Kromanti tongo, of which we had been told during our first visit here, we were finding to be an actuality, and although we took down the words as he sang them, aided in hearing them by the repetitions, their meaning was unknown to us. Some of them we learned later. Some of them we knew. "Obia" we knew concerned the spirit, [176] the vague force known by that name, while "Amba" was a deity sacred to Saturday, and was given as a "day name" [551] to women born on that day of the week. This, then, is what he sang:

"*Ma djeni ye-ye*
Obia kule ma djeni no-ho
Obia mo-ye

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

176
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WHILE THE RIVER WAS HIGH

Amba djeniyi, obia-mi yi-yi
Mo djeni-o
Mo djeni-e-ye
Obia mi-i
Man djeni no-ho
Obia mo-i
Amba djeni-e-i, obia-i-i
Man djeni no-ho, obia-i."

The music was slow and soft, and in Apanto's appealing voice the song took on a strangely moving quality. But as he sang, a stir went through the people who were listening.

"He calls his obia, ai."

"His obia will fight the spirit of the machine."

"The Bakra is cunning, but obia is strong. We shall see."

The song came to an end, the recorder was lifted. We looked at Apanto. "Will you sing another? See, the thing is not finished. There is room for more."

He looked. Yes, one could see there was room for more. Yes, he would sing more. This time the song was livelier, louder. As Apanto sang, he seemed to force the song into the horn, and this time there were no murmurs from those watching.

"*Yen-bo, yenbo,*
A yen-bo-bo no
Yen-bo, yenbo,
A yen-bo. . . . "

And with this the machine began to give way. There was a rattling sound, a scratching. The machine went more slowly, then stopped. About us the murmurs became excited. Hastily we fitted a new cylinder, hastily we tested it. It was no use. We soon found the cause. The glue had softened in the tropical dampness, and the ends had pulled loose. It was almost dark, and there was no sun to dry a newly applied coat of glue.

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

126 533 123 Apanto looked at us. "The Bakra is cunning," he repeated. "But obia is stronger. In the bush obia rules. Kromanti is too strong for the spirit of the machine."

Swiftly the dark of the bush came down. The people who had been watching, listening to what had passed, were leaving to go to their villages and to spread the news of the power of obia, and how Apanto had defeated the spirit of the machine that talks back what has been said to it. And with the gathering dark, we could sense the pulse of the drums and hear a faint echo of the shrill cry of the women dancing at Gankwe for the spirit of the dead man who lay there in the house of mourning.

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

had not acted well toward the Granman. It would be best if we did not stop there. At the others the Granman could assure us hospitality. Then there was talk of hauling wood and making raft, for our host, who knew these people well, moved safri, too, until he at last felt the moment had come to talk about buying a boat from Ajako.

When the arrangements of the sale were concluded, Ajako came back to talk with us. He had heard that we had a machine which the Kromanti spirit had broken, was it true? Did it really go again? They said the Bakra had much cunning. They said the Bakra knew African magic.

The Bakra said he knew something about Africa. The Ashanti people, for instance, were a fine people.

"*Ma na Asante, na Sa'macca sem-* . . . —But the Ashanti are Saramacca. . . . " But he would go no further, having spoken only one syllable of the word for people. He became guarded. Yes, there were some Anago people from Africa on this Saramacca River, and Dahomey, and Loango, and Fanti; the Ibo peoples were not on this river. . . . And again he would say no more. Later, when we had changed the subject, he said as if in both gratitude and explanation, "*Na sa-i-'akisi, a tranga poi*—You ask about strong things."

But he would sing into our machine, if we liked. He would sing Kromanti, if we wanted him to do so. "I won't fight your machine," he said, smiling.

"*Anabobi, Anabobi,*
Anabobi, Anabobyo,
Tata Ando.
Anabobi, Ando,
Anabobi,
Tata Adjaini,
Anabobyo
Tata Fa'aku."

"They will understand this in Africa," he said, gravely, and then he moved toward the doorway and stood there

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

looking out on the river. Whether it was a gesture that he would sing no more, or not, we could not say, but when he turned again to us he looked thoughtful. "White man, how far away is Africa? Would they kill me if I went there? Could I get a woman, if I went there?"

We sent him some food to his boat as an expression of hospitality, and word came back that when we had done eating, he would himself come and thank us. When he did come, it was to speak his thanks and to say goodbye, and he did not come alone. With him was the young man who was his traveling companion, and this young man carried gifts to us. Bayo, who had arrived a short time before, received the gifts of fig bananas and rice for us, as was the custom of these people, for to have given or received a gift in person would have been the way of a boor, just as it would have been bad form to stand about and watch us eat.

The leave-taking ritual, as that of greeting, is as formalized as a litany and almost as solemn.

"*Adiosi, adiosio—waka bon, yere. Tan bon*—Goodbye, travel well, hear? Keep well." Ajako carefully laid away his top cloth in his woven closed basket, straightened his loin cloth, and paddled away briskly from the landing.

Later, boats pulled up bringing the Gankwe men.

"Sedefo, we have a fine boat for you. It's large, and it will take a great deal of load. It's a new boat, just come down from top-side."

The men busied themselves with bringing our provisions from the shelter to the landing place so that the loading might begin. A tent had been made of palm leaves for the boat in which we ourselves were traveling, so that we might be shielded from the glare of the open river, from sunstroke and the sudden tropical downpours, and the men decided to load this boat first.

Now there was a murmur among the Gankwe men. Sedefo was passing his hands over the new boat, as though it were a human form, touching its "head," running his hands over the "ribs," the "belly." Then he balanced himself in it, and shook his head.

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

539 medicine he rubbed into the wound which Snake had made when he bit the Princess. In an hour the Princess was better, and soon she was well.

The King was very happy. He caught Human Being who had betrayed Hunter, and put him into the same prison where Hunter had been. But Hunter, who made the medicine, married the King's daughter, and became King of the land.

"It is ended," concluded Sedefo, "and I myself was there, and my daughter danced bandamba at the wedding!"

3

When Sedefo finished, it was almost midnight. Kasanya and Asikanu had sometime before gone to their hammocks. And now Sedefo, too, rose to go.

"*D'u mundu*," he said, as he went out. "Sleep well, all."

"*Ai-yo, so s'yepi-o!*—Yes, and do you sleep well, too!" Our boys sang back their response.

Since both they and we were still wide awake, they each offered to tell a short tale. But they told many stories, for there was a quality in the deep bush that night that allowed neither them nor us, unaccustomed to the jungle as we all were, to rest.

539 126 We no longer recall the exact tales they told. But later we had opportunities to record many more than just the ones they told there in the provision ground. Many were long, longer than we can give here. Many were the same as those we heard told by the Bush Negroes but which, told at night at festivals for the dead, with all the element of dramatization that went with the telling, we could not record in our notebooks. We group some of those which, for us, hold something of the quintessence of the mind of the Suriname Negroes.

Anansi Becomes a Preacher

539 Anansi asked the King to permit him to become a preacher. The King said, let him go to church one Sunday

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

REBEL DESTINY

173 Alabi, as the Granman called him, was the Araby of history, the great rebel of whom Stedman, who campaigned against the Bush Negroes long ago, wrote.

"White man, Alabi did not know how to work gold, or to earn great wealth, but he had stories in his head." He had called the first black krutu. And from Alabi had come Danieh who built Gansee, which was even now one of the most populous villages on the whole river.

"Long ago in the bush here, we had men, Bak'a!"

There was G'ama' Okosu, a Nomerimi Negro, the leader of those men who had escaped to the swamps on the coast, instead of going into the bush, and whom the people were afraid to touch.

"G'ama' Okosu could change into a kwatta monkey when he liked. He could cross the river without a boat."

The Dombi Negroes had their man, too. He was Sabaku. He was leaving his people to run away from slavery. He was going into the bush. "If we do not meet again in life, we shall meet in death," he said. He had no boat in which to cross the river, so he went to Yank'o, the buzzard, and he asked him to carry him. "I have no home, O Yank'o," he said to the buzzard, "but I will get on your back, and there my home will be. You who fly high, who fly over water, and over the high bush, carry me to safety."

The Granman himself was part Dombi and part Matchau, he said.

[825] "That is why we do not shoot a buzzard. If we shoot him by accident, then we must say 'Many thanks.' "

There was Tata Wadia who opened up this bush, who was still sung about by the Negroes of the city when they invoked the Kromanti spirit.

"I have the stick which he used."

"Will you let us see it, Granman?"

"Gbolo!"

[126] "We will photograph you holding the stick, Granman, and when we show it in our country we will tell the story."

He nodded. But the photograph was never taken.

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

"You will play everything, white man," he had told us earlier. He had been especially anxious that we play the songs we had recorded in Haiti on our way to Suriname. Often he had spoken of these songs to the chiefs at council meetings. 123 177

"White man, tell these friends the words of those songs in that foreign tongue."

He had wanted us to speak before these men the words Legba, a deity to them in the bush as he is in Haiti and in West Africa today, and Loko, and Aida Wedo, and to translate the words of the Haitian twin song we had recorded, and the one to the water god Simbi.

Now he sat in his folding chair and looked on in silence, his face thoughtful. The songs he heard moved him deeply, and his expressive face showed it.

When, in the Haitian songs, the women heard the word "Ago-e" which they recognized, they uttered a shriek. It was one of their many words for ancestors. They cried out again when they heard "Aida Wedo" pronounced, and "Loko." They, too, sang of Aida Wedo, and of Alado, and of Loko. Dan was one of their words for snake.

The white man asked permission of the Granman later to record some songs of the people of the village, and promptly Moana Yankuso addressed a man who stood by. The man was a good singer, and his seketi improvisations had made him a figure on the river. 533 126 177

"Sing for the whites, mati. Let them hear in their far country how our people sing. Let them know that we can sing, that we sing much."

The singer Mapasi sat down and began to sing. His voice was of fine quality, and he was as modest in the midst of all these women with this gift which the gods had given him, as had been the young dancer whom the Granman had summoned to dance for us. He sang in a low voice, and directly into the horn. Accompanying his singing was the hand clapping of the women, which in the small council house was deafening. His recitatives were the longest we had heard on the river, longer by far than those which had

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

surprised us that night at S'ei, and when he paused for a moment the women took up the chorus. From one song to another he went, and the hand clapping grew louder, and the chorus joined in more frequently, often breaking into his recitative, so that there was harmonizing of theme and chorus.

Once or twice the Granman called for a song we had already recorded, in order to give Mapasi a rest.

"Play us something from the lower river, white man. Let them hear their own songs, too, sung by others."

When the excitement of hearing the machine reproduce the song they had just sung had grown less intense, the singers repeated the song the phonograph was reproducing for them, for to listen to music without singing was difficult for them; just as when they sang, they could not but move their feet, though there was scarcely more than room for them to stand one close to the other. But a Bush Negro needs little room for his dancing, so that as the phonograph played their songs for them, they clapped their hands and danced in place. For a short interval, at least, the existence of the whites was forgotten in their pleasure of singing with the machine.

Until late into the night we played our records for them, and they sang for us. Whatever the consequences to the frail records of soft wax, we decided to play as long as they would listen, because of something in the manner of the Granman, something of wistfulness, let us say, and something, perhaps, which went deeper yet, as he sat there—a black Hamlet following a mute soliloquy while he looked on with his clever, perplexed eyes.

"Ai, so it is," he said at last, "and now let us go and get sleep." He rose and the others followed him out of the council house.

II

Early the next morning, while the tent on our boat was being finished, the Granman came into the council house with a calabash and a buzzard's feather in his hand. He came up to each of us in turn, and struck with the medicine-dipped feather the tops of our heads, brushed the eyes,

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-8 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

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[539] *"You have come to go, come to go far, come to go far to bring the wood to the water. But it is long, it is far, to the river. Thank you, friends."*

Then the song was taken up by the workers and, with each rhythmic measure, the great piece of lumber went farther through the jungle on its way to the river. When he had chanted for us the greeting to the men, Bayo began to sing a song relating to men's casual exploits with
[831] women and, as he finished the song, he laughed. "White man, if you came with us, you would hear what songs the men make up about women!"

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●126 The phonograph had delighted Bayo from the first. When Apanto had summoned the spirit of his obia to fight the machine, Bayo had watched. When the white man's glue had repaired the broken belt, and the hot sun had made the machine "walk" once more, Bayo had approved.

"The machine is not weak," he had said. "I will sing for it."

And sing for it he did.

But the curse of Apanto still troubled the machine, for up the river and down there had been difficulty with it. Often when there was a particularly good song to be recorded, the belt would give, the machine would fail the white man. The story of the prowess of Apanto had gone up the river with the Gankwe paddlers, and when the machine stopped, heads nodded, and we would catch the word "obia" among the murmurs of the bystanders.

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776 Bayo thought, it seemed, that the machine's proud spirit was by this time properly chastened and, since twice the machine had refused to work while he was singing into it, twice had made him stop the song and its drum accompaniment, he decided to take matters into his own hands.

"White man," said Bayo, shortly after our return from up the river, "I will help the spirit of the machine. I will

1i Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

call the great gods. Apanto's spirit is strong, but Bayo has strong gods, too."

The machine was made ready for him, and Bayo sat down on a convenient box, his head bent over the tumao drum which we had acquired and which his fingers could scarce ever be near but that they played on it.

"It is not the right drum," he said. "You should have an apinti for me to speak to the gods. But I will try it with this one. Tomorrow I will go up the river to Djamungo. I know a man who has an apinti. You will give me money, and I will buy it for you. But now I will speak on the tumao."

He began the irregular tapping which we had learned to identify as the drum language. With one hand he carried the message, while with the other he played irrelevant motifs which served to confound anyone not initiated and leave him, as it left us, who had worked out some of the general principles on which this drum language was based, utterly unable to interpret it or to tell which were the significant elements.

"The great gods will look after your machine now, if they will listen to the tumao."

The next day Bayo went upstream to get us the apinti we so desired. He was not successful, but the gods had listened to him, when he had invoked them on the tumao, for Bayo's ministrations ended all trouble with our recalcitrant phonograph. Bayo indeed had strong spirits!

As the days went on, and record after record was put on the turntable, and with its tracing of songs, or examples of Bush Negro speech, or fragments of the rhythms that called the various gods, was taken off and carefully put into its felt-lined box, Bayo visibly swelled with pride. This was his doing! With his strong spirits he had called the great gods! He was young, and he had not spoken on the proper drum, but they had listened to him! So his thoughts went, and so he would repeat them to us.

His interest in the phonograph was intensified the more he saw of it, and he sang and spoke and drummed, either

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

alone or with some friend, into the wax cylinders that spoke back in such mysterious fashion. When Apanto came to visit us, Bayo smiled as he saw the obia man approaching from the landing place.

"His obia is strong, but mine is strong, too. Let him sing into the machine."

Apanto was visibly surprised when he saw in operation the machine his spirit had wrecked. "The machine is not weak, Apanto," we assured him. "It has its own strength, and now it has the strength your gods have given it. For in the true, true Saramacca, a great obia man spoke his message to the Great God into it, and since then it has walked well with us."

Out of the corners of our eyes, we could see Bayo's pride.

"Sing for us, Apanto," we urged, for he had a beautiful voice. "Sing us an Apuku song."

Now Apanto sang, not once, but many times. It is true that when we asked for Apuku he sang Vodu, and when we asked for Vodu he sang Toné, and when we asked for Toné he sang Kromanti songs, and when we asked for Kromanti he sang the sacred dirges called "Papa" songs. Yet this was not otherwise than might be expected, and it was not too difficult to play the records to interested men of other villages, whose startled comments would soon tell us the kind of song he had sung.

It was another day when Apanto again sang, and some of these who had witnessed his first victory were about. One such addressed himself to Bayo, who was sitting near.

"Apanto's spirit fought the machine, and stopped it. But the machine works and sings back to Apanto. Its strength has come back to it."

"Awa, Apanto's spirit is strong," we heard Bayo reply, "but there are other strong spirits on the Saramacca."

4

Bayo had spent the night at Gankwe, and had returned resplendent with a new hairdressing. We joked with

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

us, with its attendant bench and modeled snake, we had only heard the term.

3

In the dim light of our oil lantern, we listened and wrote in our book, while our informant told us about the Kromanti Mama.

"You must take it down carefully," he said, "or it might harm you."

The figure on the top of the bench was named Agbo. This was the watchman, and to this figure came news of all impending evil. About the neck of the figure was a Kromanti fighting obia. A stout iron ring, with red and blue cloth tied about one-half of it, it rested near the base of the watchman.

The eyes of this watchman were its most arresting feature. They were represented by deep sockets, and the effect was heightened by the beak-like character of the nose. Two ears completed the head, and on the body breasts were modeled. It was the only piece of Bush Negro modeling we had ever seen. This most secret of art forms was evidently little practiced.

"The watchman sees all," said our informant, "the Kromanti Mama knows when there is something about that will harm. She tells the snake."

Coiled about its base, this snake was treated in the same realistic style. The head of the snake and its tail almost met at the side of the clay figure which it encircled.

"His name is Bimbawai," we were told.

The bench itself was not unlike the obia stools we had seen in the shrines of the gods. Its rectangular top, curving toward the center, was fastened to the two boards which formed the legs. Like other obia stools, it was difficult to tell whether, under the thick coating of white clay, the wood was carved or not. In one respect it differed from all others we had seen—the bench wore, fringe-like, a grass skirt of the kind worn by the *komfo*, the priests. This was suspended from the top of the bench, the cord going outside

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Aucaner

Appendix A

PHONOGRAMS OF THE AUCANER BUSH NEGROES

212
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These phonograms were collected for me by Mr. G. deBies, Dutch Government agent at Albina. They were set down by a Bush Negro named Aflakka, with the aid of an attendant Krutu or assembly. So far as is known, they are in use only among the Aucaners, and their use is limited to the older members, who employ them for purposes of sending messages over long distances. These characters are extremely difficult to collect, and Mr. deBies is to be congratulated on his efforts in this regard. The characters were redrawn for the purpose of publication by Ruth K. Kahn.

/37 cont./

614 571 578 An example of scission in a kin group: the separation of Dipelu II between Kormotibo and Asisi. (See Dip. II genealogical table.)

This scission resulted from a ridiculous incident: a falling-out which occurred between ○ Alawenchi † (E19) and ○ Bongo (E6) because of a hoe which the first claimed to have been stolen from her by Bongo.

Since neither one would yield, they became really angry and fought. /38/

△ Agosa, head of the lineage, taking the part of Alawenchi, decided to secede and settle in Asisi.

○ Pilè † (F35) and ○ Sésey † (F38) who, their mother being dead, had been raised by Alawenchi, joined them and founded families in Asisi.

[621] [784] This explains the present scission of this group and the bizarre division of its members between Kormotibo and Asisi. This scission had no result on the religious plane, unity being maintained by the pitiless tie of the kunu. Nowadays, Captain Poopu's authority is exerted normally on the fraction in Asisi. Relations between the two groups are rather good. /Figs. 5 and 6 appear here./

/39/ CHAPTER III

125 INVENTORY OF THE PEOPLING OF THE BONI VILLAGES

We have tried to take a complete census of the Boni of the Upper Maroni as of January 1, 1958, including for the women the statement of their successive unions and of their children living and dead. This census is associated with detailed plans of the villages and a study of the territorial implantation of kin groups. [126]

/40 cont./

125 [123] In spite of the relations of trust developed between the Boni and ourselves in the course of the work carried out together during four long missions, we were able to take this census only progressively and indirectly, by using simultaneously the following procedures:

—Study of the genealogy of the groups, going up from woman to woman up to the founding ancestress, then going back down from her. These genealogical tables, some of which extend [166] over nine generations and include more than 160 persons, brought [736] to light a certain number of temporarily absent people and individuals who lived away from the villages, isolated in the middle of the Creole gold miners, but continuing to make up part of their group; they also brought to light a certain number of young people and orphan children taken in by distant relatives who would not have spoken about them directly. But on this point, gaps remain;

• [126] —Detailed plan of the villages and interrogation of the village heads as to the persons living in each house;

—Interrogation of the women about their dead and surviving children;

—General verification with the help of perfectly trustworthy informants who possessed a thorough knowledge of the genealogy of the groups.

[162] The census, stopped on January 1, 1958, covered 811 persons of whom 667 /41/ were from the villages of the French bank and 144 from the Surinam bank (Kotika). As for the latter, we [765] questioned them individually when they came to the French bank, especially when they came to attend the end of mourning festivities in Boniville in October, 1957. The Kotika census is less [128] exact than that of the French villages, and in addition we were [126] not able to make a plan of the village. For this reason we have not reproduced it in the present work, where only the corresponding genealogical table appears.

/42 cont./

601 128 So-and-so, and So-and-so, can be regarded as sure. On the other hand, we have considered that there was a break in the genealogy when, going back in time, we arrived at this single datum: Ma X... was the sister of Ma Y..., for it could be a question of kinship in the classificatory sense.

No form of birthright existing among the Boni, there is some uncertainty about the order of birth of brothers and sisters for persons long dead. We have adopted the order kept by oral tradition without trying to rectify it.

613 814 829 In many African populations a special tradition is connected with perpetuating the memory of the founder, at least his name, the place of his grave. With the present-day Boni absolutely nothing like this is found; they are not concerned in any way with the true foundress of their lineage; no memory, no legend, not even a name has come down to them. It even seems as though these distant ancestors interest them little because they are less able to act in behalf of their present-day descendants. Indeed, with each new generation the memory of an ancient one dies out.

173 [126] On our first trip in 1948 we called attention, unfortunately without noting them down precisely, to /43/ very interesting oral traditions going back to the time of slavery, especially the names of the slave-owners who showed themselves to be the most cruel. In [814] 1952 the last old man who knew them had died; the very memory of what he had said was already effaced.

829 602 As a matter of fact, Boni thought, strictly practical and utilitarian, is concerned principally with keeping the memory of the part of the genealogy indispensable to the living to know their kinship ties. Memory of women whose posterity has died out and of men who did nothing remarkable is dead from the second generation on.

114 613 Since none of the travelers of the 19th century understood the importance of taking genealogies, it is probable that the names

754 /241 cont./
[126] Several cases of wisi. We transcribe these affairs as they were related to us, placing ourselves in the perspective of the narrator, without making any judgment as to the nature of the facts and their probability.

N... affair. -- N..., of Kotika, was working gold with another Boni. After they had eaten /242/ together, the latter was taken with uncontrollable vomiting, then he died. His near relatives blamed N..., accusing him of wisi. In the night N... took refuge at Benzdorp and took passage on a Djuka
[167] boat which was going down the river. He settled in Paramaribo. Since then his sister T... has gone to join him. They have left the Boni for good.

P... affair. -- Toko (Dipélu II), while boating on the lower river, wagered one morning with his friend Kwami (who told us the story) to stay in a dive for the time necessary to fill a five-liter demijohn; bet taken; Toko did not come back up, he had drowned. His body was found the next day. The family
[578] blamed one P..., of Kotika village, whose wife N... had left him to marry Toko and who at the time had made threats.
[683] They insulted him, they presented Toko's decomposed body to him: "Eat him, since thou hast killed him like game." P... stubbornly denied it. The grand man commanded that he be left alone, turning him over to Odun to punish if he were guilty. As a matter of fact, some time afterward, P... died and was declared wisimã.

[464] S... affair. -- About 1955, S..., of Kotika, about 60 years old, was working with Kwau weeding the clearings of a Benzdorp Creole who raised oxen. One morning this cattle-raiser saw one of his oxen covered with blood coming from wounds which bore tooth marks and could not have been made by bats. He followed the traces of blood which led him to S...'s hammock.

/264 cont./

796 769 539 [126] At seven o'clock, about ten men assemble at the fraga tiki. They pour water first, then tafia, while uttering the prayer whose whole text follows, taken from a tape recording:

Fintiman (pouring the water):

"Ancestors, hail! We have come to you; it is for the new year that we have come to you! as you yourselves used to do when you were (alive). May God protect us until the new year comes back again; thus it is that you yourselves used to pour the water on behalf of the ancestors. We have come to our place of prayer to speak with you, to ask you to carry our words to God."

(The same formulas are repeated several times.)

Lébiman:

"This is the New Year's Day water. It is God's day. He has arrived. Grand man Awensay (1), (because) I have

1. Predecessor of Grand Man Difu, who died in 1936. In each village the last dead head is invoked by name in order to ask him to call the more ancient dead.

not known the more distant ancestors, it is you alone that I call; call all the others."

"It has arrived, God's day. As for the grand man himself, a slight hindrance has come to him, he could not come, but it is not that he is no longer interested in the village."

"Watch over all the people who are there... we have come to pour water on your behalf, so that you will watch over the chickens and dogs of the village (and up to the living men) (2). Protect the grand man; if misfortune was about to

2. Usual prayer formula.

538 /267 cont./
[765] audience and to create an atmosphere of participation in the rite.

This ritual character makes it so that the Anansi Toli cannot be recited any time and in any old way. The story-teller may speak only at night, in the presence of a respondent and of an audience of at least two or three persons. A ritual formula: "dirinti" -- the response of the audience: "ndaeti," [124] precedes each new story. It is only with extreme repugnance [126] that informants consent to listen to and comment in the day-[761] time on a tale recorded on tape, particularly if their parents are still living, for it is said among the Refugee Blacks as in Black Africa that telling stories in full daylight makes one's father and mother die.

[174] These tales belong to an authentically African [179] accumulated store, practically unchanged in spite of the borrowing from the Creole Blacks of Paramaribo of several themes concerning automobiles, steamboats, etc., inserted in droll fashion into the traditional themes.

The usual hero of these tales is Anansi, the crafty one. [825] Anansi is the name of the Mygale spider (1). It is noteworthy,

[171]

1. The spider cycle is characteristic of the Akan (Agni-Baoulé-Abron) culture area. Anansi is the name of the Mygale spider among the Agni.

however, that this spider does not appear to play any special role in the beliefs of the Refugee Blacks and that no divinatory power is attributed to it. In fact, in the tales of which he is the hero, Anansi is nearly always represented as a man.

/269/

538 Doubtless for the same reason, nothing is found in most of these tales which brings to mind a moral inspired by a concept of good and evil. Now it is the thief and the swindler who triumph, now they find one cleverer than they. It is easy to see that for the storyteller all that is on the same plane; he simply guided his story on what seemed to him most amusing.

[522] As for the audience, it always laughs at the loser. One single tale out of 14 (No. 1) expresses a practical moral: "That is why you must not deceive people, for there are people who are cleverer than you."

Most of the tales and proverbs have already been heard many a time by the Refugee Blacks without that lessening their pleasure. More than the story itself, they appreciate the verve of the storyteller, his mimicking talent, the always new variations he knows how to give of a hackneyed theme.

538 All these tales were recorded with the tape recorder and
128 then were studied carefully with respect to vocabulary and syn-
[126] tax. We have stayed very close to the actual wording and as far as possible have kept the special Aluku turns of phrase, especially African interjections which reinforce the verbs. The tedious passages which had to be summarized are put in parentheses. Tales nos. ten to 14 are summarized.

*539 Tales

1) The Bearded Rock

One day Anansi went into the bush. He walked until ... he saw a rock, a rock with a beard. He cried: "Bearded rock!"